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SUBJECT: KAZAKHSTAN BORDER GUARDS VISIT U.S.

¶1. Summary: From October 29 to November 7, General-Major (one star equivalent) Berkaliyev, the First Deputy Director of the Kazakhstani Border Guard Service (BGS), visited Washington, Miami, and Texas to familiarize USG officials with his strategy for the development of the BGS and to learn about USG methods of border security and for providing in-service training to officers. During the visit, discussions moved forward on future cooperation between the USG and GOK; possible establishment of a regional training center for Central Asia in Almaty on the grounds of the Border Guard Academy; and a request to send two or three Kazakhstani border guards for basic training at specialized CBP Academies in El Paso, Arizona and Glynco, Georgia. General-Major Berkaliyev extended an invitation to David Aguilar, Chief of the U.S. Border Patrol, to visit Kazakhstan. End Summary.

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BACKGROUND  
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¶2. Over the past several years, the Kazakhstani Border Guard Service (BGS) has aimed to strengthen its border to better fight transnational crime, illegal migration, and the trafficking of drugs and other contraband. Kazakhstan shares its approximately 15,000 km border with Russia, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and China. In total there are 142 border guard checkpoints out of which only 92 are fully functioning. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, new national borders were created. While the historical borders of the former USSR were equipped and able to function, the internal borders between the former Soviet republics were merely administrative and many citizens were not aware of the locations of what would become national borders. As was the case in many of the newly-independent nations, Kazakhstan was not ready to protect all of its borders after independence. Poor infrastructure, insufficient numbers of border guards, new legislation, and poor living conditions for personnel in the field all contributed to this problem.

¶3. Currently, delimitation issues with neighboring countries have been solved and the BGS is in the process of placing markers on the border and creating border posts. In the framework of the 2006-2010 program of border and BGS development, the BGS is constructing posts on the border and purchasing equipment and vehicles.

¶4. With the aim of developing its infrastructure and improving the professional potential of its service, the BGS is pursuing bilateral and multilateral cooperation. USG programs are managed by offices of Export Control and Border Security (EXBS) program, the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA), Military Cooperation (OMC) and International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL).

¶5. As part the Mission Strategic Plan, INL proposed creating a professional relationship between the Border Guard Services of the

U.S. and Kazakhstan. In 2006, INL Assistant Secretary Anne Patterson and Ambassador Ordway invited the management of the BGS to visit the U.S. The BGS expressed interest in meeting to discuss overall strategy, main threats on the border, and present problems and needs. INL thus organized Berkaliyev's October 2007 trip to the U.S., including an interagency roundtable in Washington to meet with the delegation, and visits to the U.S. Coast Guard in Miami, Florida and the Rio Grande Valley Sector of the U.S. Border Patrol in McAllen, Texas.

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WASHINGTON  
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¶6. The visit of General-Major Khussain Berkaliyev, Lieutenant Colonel Yevgeniy Trofimenko, and Major Yesbulat Kussainov began in Washington with meetings at the Department of State, the Pentagon, and Customs and Border Protection. During the roundtable held on October 30, representatives of the Departments of State, Defense, and Homeland Security discussed the results of their programs and future plans with General-Major Berkaliyev.

¶7. Monette Melanson from the Department of Defense raised problems on behalf of DTRA including insufficient access to the border. In response to this issue and problems working with some parts of the BGS, Berkaliyev stated that the roundtable had prompted him to appoint one individual in the International Relations Department of the BGS to work on each program to increase transparency and increase the effectiveness of cooperation with the international community.

¶8. Berkaliyev said that the BGS is now focused on new methods for controlling the border - to use less physical force and substitute it with new technologies. Thirty percent of the border is in desolate areas with severe climate conditions. He stated that it is

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necessary to use night-vision aviation and unmanned aerial vehicles to monitor the area. The possibility of using satellite-based intelligence is at the top of the BGS' list of priorities. The BGS is also switching to mobile patrols to control portions of the border. He is interested in other countries' experience in training personnel for mobile patrols.

¶8. In following up on the May visit of General-Major Yelubayev, head of the Committee for National Security's Military Institute (the main training academy for the BGS), Berkaliyev asked about the progress of proposals to create a student exchange program and establishing the Regional Border Guard Training Center at the Military Institute. During Yelubayev's visit, professional cooperation between USG and GOK training academies, possible establishment of a regional training center for border guards of Central Asia, and the possibility of sending two Kazakhstani border guards for basic training at the CBP Academy in Glynco, Georgia were discussed. Yelubayev also invited the head of the U.S. Border Patrol Academy in Artesia to visit Kazakhstan (septel).

¶9. At CBP, Berkaliyev met with David Aguilar, Chief of the U.S. Border Patrol, and Tom Walters, Assistant Commissioner for Training and Development. Both assured Berkaliyev of continued cooperation with the Military Institute and the BGS. Aguilar presented an overview of training, operations, and the successes and failures of the U.S. Border Patrol. He thanked Berkaliyev for the warm reception received by Charles Whitmire, head of the U.S. Border Patrol Academy, in Kazakhstan and Berkaliyev extended an invitation to Aguilar to come to Kazakhstan. (Note: Whitmire's visit did much to strengthen the relationship between the training academies and a visit by Aguilar would be a welcome step in further strengthening the relationship between the BGS and CBP. End Note.) Whitmire and Yelubayev agreed to send two graduates of the Military Institute to U.S. Border Patrol Academy for basic training. Walters and Aguilar confirmed CBP's commitment to support this proposal.

¶10. Berkaliyev discussed the establishment of the Regional Training Center for Border Guards at the Military Institute with Assistant Secretary of Defense for Global Security Joe Benkert and INL Deputy

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Assistant Secretary Charles Snyder, who both supported the idea. The Military Institute will need to grow to meet the requirements of the BGS. Currently there are approximately 30,000 border guards in Kazakhstan and the BGS is planning to increase that amount to 100,000. The Military Institute has trained cadets from Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Mongolia has also expressed interest in training its cadets at the Military Institute.

¶11. The BGS already has experience in hosting international students at its Canine Center in Almaty. At the end of the 1980s, the Central USSR Canine Center was established in Almaty and border guards from throughout the USSR received training in Almaty. In 2007, the EU-funded Border Management and Drug Action Program (BOMCA) conducted three-month K-9 training for border guards from Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan in Almaty.

¶12. INL Astana will continue to support training classes for border guards in Regional Training Centers in various regions of Kazakhstan. In 2006, INL funded the renovation and equipping of a classroom in Saryagash. The classroom will be used as a training center for personnel working on the Uzbek border. The equipment provided, such as computers, presentation devices, and furniture, allows for different types of training, including training on the Berkut centralized electronic registration system. Berkaliyev mentioned that the opening of training centers in the oblasts enhances sustainability of the BGS and allows for on-the-job training of more border guards. INL DAS Snyder assured Berkaliyev that INL will continue to support the opening of classrooms throughout Kazakhstan. The next classroom will be opened in Eastern Kazakhstan, which will allow for training of personnel working both on the border with China and Russia.

¶13. When ASD Joe Benkert asked about the most serious problems faced by the BGS, Berkaliyev answered that the most vulnerable areas are the borders with Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan and the Caspian Sea. He added that the GOK has a good relationship both with Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan and that they face the threats of terrorism and narco-traffic.

¶14. During his meeting with Deputy Assistant Secretary for South and Central Asian Affairs Evan Feigenbaum, Berkaliyev shared the problems that Kazakhstani law-enforcement encounters in the fight against drugs. While all law enforcement agencies are tasked with combating drugs, there is not sufficient coordination among the agencies. Fights over seizure statistics are a common occurrence within the GOK. Another problem mentioned by Berkaliyev was corruption, though he also stated that corruption in law enforcement

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agencies has recently been uncovered through the GOK's anti-corruption program.

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MIAMI  
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¶15. During the visit to the U.S. Coast Guard in Miami, the delegation had an opportunity to tour a cutter and discuss the differences and similarities of the work of the Coast Guard and the BGS. Coast Guard officials described daily operations to the delegation and its duties in the areas of national defense, counter narcotics, marine security and safety, protection of natural resources, and waterways management. Berkaliyev explained that the BGS implements laws and regulations relative to defense and control of the state border, provides assistance to law enforcement, and protects natural resources in the border area. Kazakhstan's main priority is fighting poaching in the Caspian Sea. The delegation was particularly interested in the pay system and possibilities for career advancement in the Coast Guard.

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TEXAS  
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¶16. Representatives of the Public Affairs Office of Rio Grande Valley Sector showed the delegation the daily operations of U.S. Border Patrol agents. Berkaliyev and the delegation were interested to see the high-quality, modern equipment used by the Border Patrol, especially the video surveillance system. The delegation immediately understood the importance of intelligence analysis in addition to patrolling to increase the rates of drug seizures and arrests of illegal migrants.

¶17. Following presentations by the heads of the U.S. Border Patrol Search, Trauma and Rescue Team (BORSTAR) and Special Response Team (SRT), Berkaliyev asked about the possibility of sending his border guards to the BORSTAR Academy in El Paso, Arizona and BORTAC Academy in Glynco, Georgia to learn more about the training system. While it may take some time to receive funds for such training, the Border Guard Service has requested INL to provide training for BGS SWAT teams in Kazakhstan.

¶18. The system of border control in the U.S. definitely caught the attention of the Kazakhstani delegation. Berkaliyev is very interested in increasing international programs. He was also interested in the BORSTAR and BORTAC programs and would like to establish a unit similar to BORSTAR in the BGS. According to Berkaliyev, the BGS will focus on the development of its personnel and increasing the knowledge and skills of border guards through exchange programs.

¶19. Comment. This visit was another important step in developing the relationship between the BGS and its counterparts in the USG. General-Major Berkaliyev's returned home with many ideas for reforming and modernizing the BGS and its training methods. The USG has an opportunity now to work with both Berkaliyev and Yelubayev to strengthen the BGS and provide it the necessary tools to be a leader in fighting transnational crime in Central Asia. End Comment.

¶20. Chief Aguilar, Assistant Commissioner Walters, DAS Snyder, and DAS Feigenbaum have not cleared this cable.

ORDWAY